

Minutes of the
Edina Park Board
June 17, 2009
Edina City Hall, Council Chambers

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jennifer Kenney, Ben Pobuda, Todd Fronek, Ray O'Connell, Randy Meyer, Dan Peterson

MEMBERS ABSENT: Joseph Hulbert, Jeff Sorem, Bill Lough, Keeya Steel, Rob Presthus

STAFF PRESENT: John Keprios, Janet Canton, Ed MacHolda, Tom Shirley, Ann Kattreh, Larry Thayer, Todd Anderson, John Valliere

I. APPROVAL OF THE MAY 12, 2009 PARK BOARD MINUTES

Dan Peterson MOVED TO APPROVE THE MAY 12, 2009 PARK BOARD MINUTES.
Ray O'Connell SECONDED THE MOTION. MINUTES APPROVED.

II. NEW BUSINESS

- A. 2010-2014 Capital Improvement Plan – Mr. Keprios gave a power point presentation on the 2010-2014 Capital Improvement Plan. Mr. Keprios explained to the Park Board that they have been asked to reduce the dollar amounts all across the board for a variety of reasons. He commented that we are experiencing revenue shortfalls and we are also faced with levy limits for at least the next couple of years. Mr. Keprios went over the proposed reduced dollar amounts for the general parks CIP for 2010-2014. He pointed out that better than 90% of their CIP is basically maintenance and very little for what would be “new additional” projects.

Mr. Fronek asked Mr. Keprios if the community garden would be something that would be self-sustaining or will it continue to be a drain on resources. He asked if it would be \$30,000 well spent or is it something that needs to be pushed out another year. Mr. Keprios responded that it becomes a choice of priority and that the \$30,000 is for infrastructure and not for operating. He noted that he would like to think they can operate it with existing funding within the operating budget and added that he doesn't think it would be a significant drain on their resources.

Mr. Keprios explained to the Park Board that, after doing some research, he thinks they could put in a community garden at Yorktown Park right next to the skate park for \$30,000. He informed the Park Board that the YMCA is developing a new building and during construction they are going to continue to maintain their old building so for parking they intend to use Yorktown Park and convert the grass area into some type of hard surface parking lot. He noted that he spoke with the YMCA's Executive Director Greg Hanks who was very receptive to the proposal to have the YMCA pay for the development of a community garden when the temporary parking area is restored to its original condition. The \$30,000 would be to cover any utility expenses needed to bring water to the site. The YMCA would pay for all other costs associated with developing the community garden. Mr. Keprios shared that Mr.

Hanks stated that the YMCA has members interested in gardening and felt that the YMCA and the Edina Park and Recreation Department could possibly partner on a collaborative community garden program.

Larry Thayer, Manager of Braemar Ice Arena, went through all of the items for the Arena's proposed CIP for 2010-2014 and pointed out that 2010 will be a big year because they are going to essentially refurbish the West Arena.

Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that it's important to understand that the enterprise facilities rely on a different source of funding for their CIP dollars and it doesn't really compete with the general parks' CIP. The enterprise facilities are a separate fund to which they have to rely on either their own revenues or in some cases revenue bonds that they are then obligated to have to pay back through future revenues. He noted that the bottom line is they don't compete with each other so they are not quite as subject to the shortfalls that they are going to find in their operating budget that funds the general park CIP. Mr. Keprios commented that he is pleased to say that Braemar Arena has now made its last revenue bond payment. We have been waiting until now to replace the refrigeration system because we can now afford to take on new revenue bond payments.

Tom Shirley, Manager of Centennial Lakes, went through all of the proposed projects for the CIP for Centennial Lakes for 2010-2014. He noted that they will mostly be working on and maintaining their existing infrastructure.

Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that the source of funding for operations, maintenance and capital improvements for Centennial Lakes and Edinborough Park actually comes through a variety of sources. Tax increment financing was used to create the trust fund at the time of development. Centennial Lakes Park also relies on fees and charges, interest earnings from the trust fund and the annual maintenance fees paid by the residential and commercial properties within the development. He noted that currently there is no revenue bond scenario as there is with the arena and golf course. Mr. Keprios commented that trust fund started out at around 9 million dollars and is now down to approximately 4 million dollars.

Ann Kattreh, Manager of Edinborough Park, went through all of the proposed items for the CIP for Edinborough Park for 2010-2014 and noted that like the other facilities they are focusing on just maintaining and replacing existing infrastructure.

Mr. Peterson asked Ms. Kattreh if they keep user counts, if they have been affected by the economy and what typical revenues are generated over the course of a year. Ms. Kattreh replied that they do keep very close counts and that numbers have actually been very good. She noted that their revenues are slightly up as well as the number of people using the park. Ms. Kattreh added that definitely their revenues have slightly exceeded their expectations even given the economic situation.

John Valliere, Braemar Golf Course Manager, informed the Park Board that currently they are just struggling with some of their debt because they did a lot of expansion a

few years ago and so basically that is what they are contending with now. He then went through all of the items on the CIP for the golf courses for 2010-2014.

Mr. Keprios commented that he would really like to commend his golf course staff for the wonderful job they do in running the golf course as well as their ability to pay the bonding debt that they face. Mr. Keprios explained that back when they had to borrow money to make these improvements (purchase of Fred Richards Golf Course, expansion of the regulation golf course and expansion of the clubhouse) the thinking was that each year they would have another increase in revenue and greens fees so that more money would be available to make larger bond payments and therefore they back ended their bonds which are in their absolute high water marks coupled with the downturn in the economy. Their third challenge is that golf courses in general are overbuilt and the golf course industry as a whole, regardless of the downturn in the economy, is down for just that reason as well. Mr. Keprios stated that they are facing three of probably the biggest financial challenges the golf course has ever faced. He noted his staff is doing a marvelous job of bringing in the revenues given the challenges they are facing.

Mr. Meyer asked if any consideration has been given to refinancing that debt so you don't defer too long some of the other upgrades you would like to do. Mr. Valliere replied that he did go to the finance department and asked that question to which he found out it has already been redone one time and they are not able to do it again.

Mr. Peterson asked what the user count is in a typical year at the three golf courses. Mr. Valliere replied that at the regulation course it's in the 63,000 to 65,000 range. He noted that it has been as low as 62,050 and as high as 87,000. He noted that the executive courses used to be in the high 20,000s and now they are in the low 20,000s. He added that presently they are approximately 4,500 rounds ahead of last year; however last year was not a good weather year.

Mr. MacHolda explained to the Park Board that in looking at the CIP for the Aquatic Center they are requesting to delay the flow rider addition and begin the project at the end of 2010 instead of the 2009 season. When the project was approved, the economy was much different and therefore now recommend to push it back a year.

Mr. Meyer asked Mr. MacHolda if they are doing this because the thinking is they may not have as strong of a season as they were planning. He also asked how the season passes are holding up compared to a year ago. Mr. MacHolda replied that currently there are 7,000 names with season passes which is down. He noted that for the past two years they've had approximately 10,500 at the conclusion of the season.

Ray O'Connell MOVED TO APPROVE THE GENERAL PARK FACILITY AS WELL AS ALL OF THE ENTERPRISE FACILITIES AS DISCUSSED AND OUTLINED IN THE STAFF REPORT. Dan Peterson SECONDED THE MOTION. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

III. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Community Gardens – Mr. Keprios commented that in addition to what he said earlier he still intends to do some more research and get a little more detail on community gardens. Mr. Keprios noted that he thinks he covered most of what he wanted to on how community gardens are managed, operated and the cost to administer, etc. He stated the he does think Yorktown Park is a viable site, although there may be others that have not yet been considered. Mr. Keprios indicated that he also intends to attempt to research and validate the need and desire for community gardens.
- B. Chowen Park - Mr. Keprios informed the Park Board that the Chowen Park issue has been delayed until the second meeting in July for the City Council.

Mr. O'Connell pointed out that he voted on the prevailing side of the Chowen Park situation and was thinking of making a different motion. He indicated he would like the Park Board to reconsider their action, conduct another mailing and address the issue again in July. Mr. O'Connell explained that he has received several calls from people who said they did not get the notice. He commented that he voted for it based on emotion; however, now looking at the Chowen situation and with the additional publicity that was in the newspaper, he thinks there would be enough time to put out an additional mailing to a broader area and that's his motion. Mr. Fronek asked Mr. O'Connell what exactly is his motion to which Mr. O'Connell replied MOVE TO CONDUCT ANOTHER MAILING TO A BROADER AREA AND BRING THE MATTER BACK TO THE PARK BOARD FOR RECONSIDERATION.

Motion died for lack of second.

Mr. Meyer asked Mr. O'Connell what he was hoping to accomplish by the additional mailing. Mr. O'Connell replied the complaints he received were from people who live more than 1,000 feet from the park. Mr. Meyer asked Mr. O'Connell what distance he would suggest to which Mr. O'Connell replied for this situation he would suggest 3,000 feet. Mr. Meyer asked if the goal of the additional mailing would be to have a hearing as part of the Park Board meeting to get more input. Mr. O'Connell responded that they need to give consideration on any of these types of things to the public at large because they are paying the taxes and continuing the upkeep. Therefore we owe them every benefit we can give them within reason.

Mr. Meyer asked if the City Council will conduct a hearing at the July 21st City Council meeting. He noted that he wants the opportunity for people to speak but he doesn't want to duplicate something just to duplicate it. Mr. Keprios commented that it's up to the City Council whether they choose to delay a decision and conduct another public hearing. Mr. Meyer asked Mr. O'Connell if the reason he is suggesting this is because there is not another public hearing scheduled and therefore there may not be another chance for public input. Mr. O'Connell replied that is correct.

Mr. Peterson indicated that there are plenty of chances at the City Council meeting for comments. He noted that he still thinks they should try it for a year and see what happens.

Mr. Meyer asked if they did a mailer to the 3,000 feet how many homes would that include to which Mr. Keprios replied that he really did not know; however, thinks it would a minimum of 900 homes. Mr. Meyer stated that he understands what Mr. O'Connell is trying to accomplish; however, he doesn't know if that is the best use of staff time and taxpayer dollars to do something we've already been through but at the same time he wants to allow people to have a chance to be heard.

Ms. Kenney suggested to Mr. O'Connell that at this point since he has had direct communication from six people who felt they didn't have the chance to present their opinion on the idea that you recommend to those people that they contact the City Council. She added there is still an opportunity for them to contact the City Council. She stated that if there is enough public outcry the City Council may decide to have a public hearing. Ms. Kenney indicated that at a minimum they would be able to contact the City Council directly with their concerns so that they didn't feel like they hadn't been heard by anyone.

Mr. Keprios stated that residents may still submit their views in writing to him either by email, postal mail or fax. In turn, we copy written comment on to all Park Board members and City Council.

Mr. Peterson asked Mr. Keprios if when he does a mailing is a notice posted at the local park property so that those who don't get the mailing but use the park can see that something is coming up. Mr. Keprios replied that is a practice they have used in the past; however, it was not done in this case.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:30 PM.